



Focus on Draft General Permit for Biosolids Management

from Ecology's Solid Waste and Financial Assistance Program, State Resources Section

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Background

The Washington state biosolids program establishes standards for managing biosolids. Approximately 350 facilities in the state are currently affected by the program. The majority of them are publicly owned wastewater-treatment plants, privately owned wastewater-treatment plants that treat only domestic sewage, and similar state and federal facilities, such as military bases, prisons and parks.

Ecology's Solid Waste and Financial Assistance Program is in the process of developing a new *Statewide General Permit for Biosolids Management* to replace the expired general permit.

Geographic Applicability of General Permit

The permit has statewide applicability, but does not apply to activities that occur on or to facilities on tribal lands.

General Permit Requirements

The permit governs the quality of biosolids applied to the land or transferred to other facilities. It also governs practices at land-application sites. Permit requirements include, but are not limited to addressing pollutant concentrations, pathogen reduction, vector attraction reduction, agronomic rates of application, methods and timing of application, buffers to wells and other sensitive areas, crop harvest restrictions, and site management and access.

Facilities Covered Under the General Permit

A list of facilities that have submitted a *Notice of Intent to Apply for Coverage or to Renew Coverage* under the proposed new permit was published in the state register on Nov. 18, 2003. The list of facilities can be viewed at:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/biosolids/pdf/noifacilities.pdf>

Management of Biosolids in Washington

According to data collected from the 2003 Annual Biosolids Reports, approximately 350 facilities produced about 95,000 dry tons of biosolids in Washington state. Of that total, 83 percent of the biosolids produced were land applied; 14 percent were incinerated; and three percent were disposed in a landfill.

Quality Standards for Biosolids

State standards are the same as federal standards and can be found in Chapter 173-308 of the Washington Administrative Code, under *Biosolids Management*.

Biosolids must meet standards for pollutant limits, pathogen reduction, and vector-attraction reduction appropriate to the intended end use. Biosolids destined for use in situations where future exposures are uncontrolled, such as on lawns, in home gardens and on golf courses, must meet higher standards than biosolids that are applied to areas where access and crop-harvest restrictions can be put in place.

How to Become Involved

You can become involved by attending the public hearings listed below and by submitting comments either by regular mail or by e-mail during the public comment period, which is open through 5 PM on April 8, 2005.

You can also subscribe to the general permit mailing list. Persons on the mailing list will be kept informed about the development of a final general permit. Request to be added to the mailing list by sending a letter to Daniel Thompson, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, WA 98504-7600, ATTN: Biosolids Coordinator.

The state biosolids program's Web page contains information, documents, and links to additional information, documents and Web sites. This page is located at:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/biosolids/index.html>.

In addition, we have created a Web page that contains information and documents specific to the draft permit. You may use this page for tracking activities related to the draft permit, to make comments on the draft permit during the public comment period, or to subscribe to the general permit mailing list.

This page is located at: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/biosolids/draftgenpermit.html>.

Time and Place of Public Hearings

Two public hearings will be held on the permit. One will be held on April 6, 2005, from 6-8 PM in the Auditorium at the Department of Ecology headquarters building at 300 Desmond Drive SE, Lacey, WA 98503. The other public hearing will be held on April 7, 2005, from 6-8 PM in the Oreana Room at the Department of Ecology's Central Regional Office building at 15 West Yakima Avenue, Yakima, WA 98902.

Procedures for the Formulation of a Final General Permit

There will be a 30-day comment period for this draft permit. All comments received on this draft permit by the Department of Ecology by 5 p.m. on April 8, 2005, will be considered. Anyone may express their comments, concerns, or recommendations regarding the draft permit by submitting comments in writing or at a public hearing. Comments will be accepted by e-mail or by other means, including U.S. mail, delivered to the Department of Ecology headquarters office by the close of the comment period. The mailing address for the Department of Ecology headquarters is: PO Box 47600, Olympia, WA 98504-7600, and the physical address (for hand delivery or other means) is: 300 Desmond Drive SE, Lacey, WA. Appropriate changes, if any, will be made before issuing the final permit. A summary of responses to comments received will be prepared and available for review by April 30, 2005.